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Environmental Assessment Office

2003/04
Annual Service Plan Report

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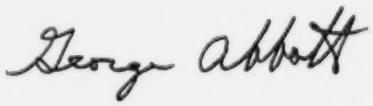
Accountability Statement

The 2003/04 Environmental Assessment Office Annual Service Plan Report was prepared under my direction and in accordance with the *Budget Transparency and Accountability Act*. This report compares the actual results to the expected results identified in the Environmental Assessment Office's 2003/04 Service Plan. I am accountable for the Environmental Assessment Office's results and the basis on which they have been reported.

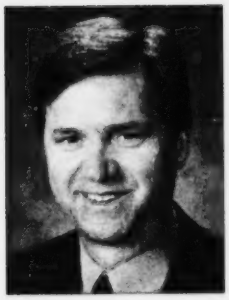


Honourable George Abbott
Minister of Sustainable Resource Management
and Minister Responsible for
the Environmental Assessment Office

June 21, 2004

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Environmental Assessment Office



The Environmental Assessment Office plays an important role in British Columbia by delivering a thorough, timely and integrated environmental assessment review process that promotes the provincial goal of sustainability by protecting the environment and fostering a sound economy.

Recent reforms to the environmental assessment process to streamline and customize review procedures are beginning to demonstrate increased business and industry confidence. More proponents are entering the process voluntarily and new provincial timelines are providing process certainty. Changes to the process are intended to contribute to the government's strategic priorities for an improved investment climate while preserving high environmental standards.

I am pleased to present the British Columbia Environmental Assessment Office's Annual Report for the period April 1, 2003 to March 31, 2004. The purpose of this report is to facilitate the public's understanding of the core business of the Environmental Assessment Office, the resources it employs and its progress towards achieving performance targets outlined in the Environmental Assessment Office's Service Plan 2003/04 to 2005/06.

I look forward to the future as the Environmental Assessment Office monitors the implementation of the *Environmental Assessment Act* and we continue to improve the way that environmental assessment is done in this province.

George Abbott

Honourable George Abbott
Minister of Sustainable Resource Management
and Minister Responsible for
the Environmental Assessment Office

Year-at-a-Glance Highlights

Overview

In fiscal 2002/2003 major changes were made to the environmental assessment review process. British Columbia's *Environmental Assessment Act* (R.S.B.C. 1996, c.119) which had been in effect since June, 1995 was replaced with a new *Environmental Assessment Act* (S.B.C. 2002, c.43) (the Act). While the original environmental assessment process was thorough and balanced, a number of limitations became apparent in its use, including a highly prescriptive and standardized approach not conducive to dealing with the unique challenges of individual projects.

The following strategic shifts were adopted as part of the Environmental Assessment Office's Core Services Review direction. Beginning with the implementation of the new Act in December 2002, the Environmental Assessment Office has undertaken major reform of the environmental assessment process:

- from a prescriptive and standardized process to a flexible and customized process that can be tailored to the specific needs of the project;
- from a process that placed a heavy administrative burden on ministries to a process that reduces government's administrative burden and reduces costs;
- from a process that could be quite lengthy to a shorter overall review process that places greater responsibility on proponent deliverables; and
- from a process that provided little flexibility in determining which projects would be reviewed to a process that provides more flexibility in designating projects as reviewable.

Although the new Act has been in effect for just over a year, initial signs are encouraging. In the past year, five proponents have asked the Environmental Assessment Office to conduct an environmental assessment review even though their projects did not trigger a review under the Reviewable Projects Regulation. Experience to date with proponents choosing to "opt-in" suggests increased proponent confidence in the environmental assessment process. At the same time, public consultation efforts have not diminished under the new process and a high level of First Nations participation has also been maintained. Joint federal/provincial environmental assessment reviews face some harmonization challenges which are partially being addressed through a new cooperative agreement. Targeted cost efficiencies have been realized and the Environmental Assessment Office is ready for a sustained volume of project reviews over the next two years.

The Environmental Assessment Office is currently handling more than twice the number of reviewable projects forecast for 2003/04. The new streamlined environmental assessment process provides greater process efficiencies which helps offset the increased workload. The new Act also ensures that British Columbia maintains a fair and balanced process that is competitive with other jurisdictions.

Projects Under Review, Certified, Amended or Exempted from the Process

During the 2003/04 fiscal year, thirty-one projects were in the environmental assessment process (Appendix 3) and four projects (Prince George Groundwater, Vancouver Island Generation project, Coursier Dam Decommissioning and Eagle Rock Quarry) were certified (Appendix 1). Also, six existing project approval certificates issued under the previous legislation were amended (Appendix 2). Further information on the status of each project review, location of projects, and issues raised is available on the Environmental Assessment Office's Project Information Centre website (http://www.eao.gov.bc.ca).

Under the new legislation the Environmental Assessment Office has the option of exempting a project from an environmental assessment, if the Environmental Assessment Office is satisfied that the project will not result in any significant adverse effects, when practical mitigation measures are taken into account. This last year, three projects were exempted: the Sooke Dam height increase, near Victoria; Norske Canada's de-inking plant at Crofton; and Canfor's Prince George wood-residue-fired cogeneration project. Projects that are exempted from an environmental assessment review must still obtain all relevant permits before they can proceed.

Intergovernmental

When a project is subject to both the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* as well as the *British Columbia Environmental Assessment Act*, the Environmental Assessment Office ensures that overlap and duplication for both processes is reduced to the greatest extent possible. In March 2004, the governments of Canada and British Columbia approved the Canada-British Columbia Agreement on Environmental Assessment Cooperation (2004) to reduce overlap and duplication and to ensure that provincial timelines are considered in joint reviews.

The Environmental Assessment Office signed a memorandum of understanding with the Washington Department of Ecology regarding cooperation on environmental assessment in June 2001. This agreement was updated in late 2003 to reflect British Columbia's new Act. The purpose of the protocol is to ensure that each jurisdiction provides notice of and information about projects that are within 100 km of the international border and therefore could have effects on the neighbouring jurisdiction.

First Nations

The Environmental Assessment Office continues to work with First Nations to support their participation in reviews and to ensure aboriginal issues are appropriately considered through meaningful consultation and accommodation. Proponents, as well as the federal and provincial governments, continue to work with First Nations on issues related to individual projects as well as larger economic and resource issues.

Environmental Assessment Office Role and Services

Environmental Assessment Office

Overview

The Environmental Assessment Office leads reviews of proposed large-scale projects in British Columbia. Environmental assessment is a process for identifying, predicting, evaluating and mitigating potentially significant adverse impacts of major projects. The process examines a broad range of possible effects — environmental, economic, social, health and heritage — and supports balanced decision-making.

Environmental assessment serves the public interest by:

- ensuring that major projects will not threaten public health/safety or adversely affect local communities and the environment, and by instilling public confidence that this is the case;
- supporting sustainable development that improves the provincial economy;
- avoiding project planning errors which could be costly to both private and public interests;
- protecting British Columbia's reputation for environmental integrity in external markets;
- satisfying public expectations for political accountability for project approval decisions; and
- ensuring that decisions on major projects are linked to government's larger responsibility for the management of provincial land and resources.

Vision, Mission and Principles

Vision

Sustainable economic development that reflects the social, cultural and environmental values of British Columbians.

Mission

Provide British Columbians with a well-designed and well-delivered environmental assessment process that reflects the government's objectives for economic growth, strong communities and sustainable resource management, based on maintaining high environmental standards.

Principles

The Environmental Assessment Office is guided by the following principles:

1. ***Neutrality*** — Neutrally and centrally administered process.
2. ***Fairness*** — Fair and open process.
3. ***Balance*** — Decisions are based on impartial, balanced and informed recommendations.
4. ***Science-based decision-making*** — Best available information, knowledge and technologies are considered and utilized.
5. ***Consultative*** — Participatory and transparent, ensuring meaningful opportunities for public and First Nations input.
6. ***Inter-jurisdictional coordination*** — Streamlined process minimizing duplication and overlap.

Organizational Values

The Environmental Assessment Office is guided in its organizational behaviour by the following values:

- cooperation and teamwork;
- respect for the values and opinions of others;
- continuous improvement to ensure quality service;
- a professional and high-performance culture, encouraging innovation and creativity;
- a healthy workplace supporting staff development, recognition, and opportunity; and
- accountability to the people of British Columbia.

Environmental Assessment Office Operating Context

Overview — The number of reviewable projects has more than doubled compared to levels expected when the Service Plan and budget were first developed in 2001. The new Act and reforms to streamline the environmental assessment process are providing greater process efficiencies for the Environmental Assessment Office and other provincial agencies to partially compensate for this increasing workload. These reforms are also ensuring that British Columbia maintains a fair and balanced process that is competitive with other jurisdictions.

The improvements to British Columbia's environmental assessment process have resulted in five projects "opting-in" to the process. Other factors contributing to the number of new projects that entered the environmental assessment process last year include:

- *Provincial Energy Plan* — The release of the new provincial energy plan resulted in two new "Wind Farm" projects entering the environmental assessment process in fiscal year 03/04.

- *Mining Sector Development* — Increasing metal and coal prices have resulted in increased investment in mining in the province. There are six mining projects active in the environmental assessment process and a number expressing interest in entering the process.
- *Provincial Infrastructure Development* — Four major public/private partnership projects were in either the pre-application or application stage in 03/04: the Vancouver Trade and Convention Centre, the rapid transit link between downtown Vancouver and the airport (RAV), the Sea to Sky Highway improvements, and the New Fraser River Crossing Project.

Federal Government's Role — More than 80 per cent of projects subject to the provincial environmental assessment process must also satisfy federal environmental assessment requirements. As a result of court decisions, new initiatives and the evolution of the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* (CEAA), the federal government continues to modify and in some cases enlarge its interpretation of federal jurisdiction. Some of the amendments to CEAA that came into effect in the fall of 2003 have resulted in further challenges for the province in coordinating harmonized reviews and meeting provincially legislated timelines. Other amendments to CEAA will improve the ability to harmonize joint reviews. The Environmental Assessment Office is monitoring the changes to CEAA while continuing to refine operating procedures with the federal government to ensure harmonized federal/provincial reviews proceed in a smooth and timely manner.

In March 2004, the governments of Canada and British Columbia approved the Canada-British Columbia Agreement on Environmental Assessment Cooperation (2004) with improvements to facilitate agreement on project-specific timelines and the introduction of more effective management of federal participation.

First Nations — Proponents, as well as the federal and provincial governments, worked with First Nations on issues related to individual projects as well as larger economic and resource issues. Specific initiatives relating to First Nations are discussed under the "Performance Reporting" section.

Environmental Assessment Office Structure and Core Business Areas

The core functions of the Environmental Assessment Office form the basis for fulfilling its mandated responsibilities. These core functions are delivered through two business areas:

Major Project Environmental Assessments

The Environmental Assessment Office oversees and manages the province's major project environmental review process to assess environmental, economic, social and other aspects of proposed projects in the following sectors: industrial, mining, energy, water management (dams, dykes, and reservoirs), waste disposal, food processing, transportation and tourism (destination resorts).

Corporate Operations

Many of the Environmental Assessment Office's corporate services are shared with the Ministries of Sustainable Resource Management and Water, Land and Air Protection. Corporate operations that are the responsibility of the Environmental Assessment Office include service planning, budgeting, staff development, policy and legislation, records management, and management of the electronic Project Information Centre and website.

Update on *New Era* Commitments

The *Environmental Assessment Office Service Plan 2003/04 to 2005/06* supports the Government of British Columbia's long-term goals of:

- a strong and vibrant provincial economy; and
- safe, healthy communities and a sustainable environment.

The Environmental Assessment Office's principles and organizational values support the government's core values. The goals, objectives, and strategies of the Environmental Assessment Office reflect government's commitment to operate in an innovative, results-oriented, and accountable manner consistent with the following managerial principles:

- high standards of accountability, consultation and ethics;
- focused and efficient delivery of government services;
- social and fiscal responsibility;
- open and transparent government; and
- an innovative and goal-oriented public service.

While no *New Era* commitments refer specifically to environmental assessment, or the Environmental Assessment Office, the environmental assessment process contributes to the achievement of government commitments for:

- a thriving private sector economy and enhanced competitive business climate;
- cutting red tape and providing faster approvals and greater access to Crown land and resources;
- effective and sustainable use of provincial land and resources;
- a scientifically-based, balanced and principled approach to environmental management;
- protecting human health;
- eliminating federal/provincial overlaps that increase costs, and frustrate economic development;
- improving the regulatory regime and reducing the number of regulations by one-third within three years;
- increased focus on customer service and leadership in electronic government; and
- open and accountable government.

Performance Reporting

Report on Results

Goal 1: *Efficient and Effective Delivery of Environmental Assessment*

This goal was met through two objectives: continual improvement of provincial environmental assessment and greater procedural certainty when both the provincial and federal CEAA review processes are involved.

Objective 1: *Continual Improvement of Provincial Environmental Assessment*

Improvements to environmental assessment are ongoing. Most recently, reforms to the Act have streamlined and improved the process by making it less prescriptive and more flexible.

Key Strategies

- Timely and cost efficient delivery of the provincial environmental assessment process;
- Evaluation of the environmental assessment process and development of refinements based on implementation experience;
- Alignment of environmental assessment and permitting/licensing;
- Fulfillment of government's legal obligations towards First Nations; and
- Facilitating proponents' and review participants' understanding of relationship-building with First Nations.

Performance Measures and Results

1. *Success meeting timelines*

One key objective of environmental assessment is timeliness and process certainty. The British Columbia process has legislated timelines and the Environmental Assessment Office monitors whether these timelines are being met. Early in the review, a schedule is prepared that shows the major milestones and targets. The Environmental Assessment Office is proactive at anticipating and scheduling activities and encouraging effort, for example consultation during the pre-application stage, to ensure that projects stay on track to meet schedules and stay within legislated timelines.

Performance Measure	2003/04 Target	2003/04 Actual	Variance
Duration of government application review	90% of application reviews completed in 180 days	75% of application reviews completed in 180 days	One project did not meet the timeline for reasons discussed below

Reviews of the Coursier Dam Decommissioning, Eagle Rock Quarry, and the Prince George Groundwater Projects were completed within the legislated timeline of 180 days.
The Environmental Assessment Office Executive Director issued two timeline extensions for the Vancouver Island Energy Corporation (VIEC) which caused the Vancouver Island Generation project review to exceed the 180-day timeline. Both timeline extensions were related to the concurrent British Columbia Utilities Commission (BCUC) hearing into VIEC's application for a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity. The Environmental Assessment Office needed time to consider the implications of the BCUC decision before referring VIEC's application for an Environmental Assessment Certificate to Ministers, hence the delay in concluding the environmental assessment review.

Several proponents have expressed interest in the new broader concurrent permitting provisions which can be effective in aligning environmental assessment and provincial permitting and licensing requirements. Most power project proponents are considering concurrent permitting of *Water Act* and *Land Act* tenure applications, and in 2003, a proponent for an aggregate quarry requested concurrent processing of permit applications. As a result, the quarry was granted a *Mines Act* permit within 7 days of the environmental assessment certificate being issued. Early experience with concurrent permitting suggests that this could become a highly valued feature of the new Act where applicable.
For example, concurrent permitting is easier to arrange for more straightforward projects, such as aggregate mines, but may be a less attractive option for proponents of complex major mines (e.g., where the mine plan is rapidly evolving).

To assist the Environmental Assessment Office with understanding First Nations concerns and issues with environmental assessment, the Environmental Assessment Office set up the First Nations Environmental Assessment Working Group (FNEAWG) with representation from several First Nations. During the 2003/04 period, FNEAWG was responsible for preparing a First Nations Environmental Assessment Tool Kit, a guide to environmental assessment from the perspective of First Nations. It is expected that this guide will facilitate a better understanding of environmental assessment and help improve working relationships with First Nations communities on project reviews.

2. *Participants' perceptions of a professional, expert, fair and open review process*

The Environmental Assessment Office relies on surveys of review participants to provide feedback on the environmental assessment process to determine where improvements are needed.

Performance Measure	2002/03 Base data	2003/04 Target	2003/04 Actual	Variance
Participants' perceptions of a professional, expert, fair, and open review process	Proponent, First Nations and review participant survey conducted	Proponents: Continual Improvement. Others: Maintain or improve	The EAO is in the process of reviewing the results of the 2004 client survey and identifying areas for improvement that will be reported in the 2004/05 Service Plan Report	To be evaluated when data are available

The findings of the Environmental Assessment Office Client Satisfaction Survey (2004) conducted from April 19, 2004 to May 6, 2004 are being reviewed to identify areas for improvement that will be reported in the 2004/05 Service Plan Report.

3. *Costs per Project Under Review*

During Core Services Review it was estimated that the costs to government in conducting environmental assessment reviews could be reduced by one-third, without a significant reduction in the number of projects that are subject to review and with no reduction in review quality. The number of reviewable projects has more than doubled compared to levels expected during Core Services Review.

Performance Measure	2002/03 Base data	2003/04 Target	2003/04 Actual	2003/04 Variance
Average annual government costs per project for environmental assessment	Estimated to be $317K. Average Annual government costs per project confirmed as $317K. The equivalent estimated average annual costs per project for the EAO is $265K.	Reduce 2002/03 level of costs per project by 5%.	The average annual EAO project cost is $106,000 which is down from $131,000 in 2002/03. The average annual project cost for 2003/04 ($106,000) exceeds both the 5 per cent and the 10 per cent target reductions for 2003/04 and 2004/05 respectively.	Target exceeded. No variance.

This performance measure was changed in the 2004/05 Environmental Assessment Office Service Plan to reflect average annual Environmental Assessment Office costs per project for environmental assessment instead of average annual government costs since Environmental Assessment Office costs are a more meaningful measure of output and more accurate. The 2002/03 base data was recalculated to reflect Environmental Assessment Office costs to allow comparisons with current and future years.

The average annual Environmental Assessment Office cost per project for 2003/04 ($106K) exceeds both the 5 per cent and 10 per cent targets for 2003/04 and 2004/05 respectively.

4. *Reducing unnecessary red tape and regulation*

The Government of British Columbia is committed to reducing unnecessary red tape and regulation by one-third within three years. The Environmental Assessment Office set a target of 33 per cent reduction for fiscal year 2004/05.

Performance Measure	2002/03 Base Data	2003/04 Target	2003/04 Actual	2003/04 Variance
Deregulation: reducing unnecessary red tape and regulation	56% reduction in regulatory requirements of provincial environmental assessment	Maintain or reduce regulatory requirements of provincial environmental assessments	56% reduction in regulatory requirements of provincial environmental assessments maintained	Target exceeded and maintained. No variance

In 2002/03 the Environmental Assessment Office reduced regulations by 56% from the previous year which more than exceeded the target for 2004/05.

Objective 2: ***Enhance federal/provincial cooperation to increase timeliness and certainty and minimize overlap and duplication***

When a project is subject to both CEAA and the Act, the Environmental Assessment Office works closely with the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency and other federal agencies to ensure the requirements of both levels of government are met through a harmonized process. Under the Canada-British Columbia Agreement on Environmental Assessment Cooperation (2004), the requirements of both processes are met through coordinated assessments to minimize overlap and duplication. Work plans, signed off by the Environmental Assessment Office and the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency are developed for each project requiring a harmonized review. Work plans set out project-specific procedures for completing a harmonized review, which includes determining the scope of project, scope of assessment and project review schedule.

Key Strategies:

- Implement operational processes (work plans, dispute resolution mechanisms) to facilitate federal/provincial cooperation; and
- Negotiate a new federal/provincial agreement for environmental assessment cooperation.

5. *Harmonized Intergovernmental Review*

Performance Measure	2002/03 Base Data	2003/04 Target	2003/04 Actual	Variance
Participants' perceptions of efforts made to achieve a harmonized intergovernmental review	Proponent, First Nations and review participants survey conducted	Proponents: Continual improvement. Others: Maintain or improve	The EAO is reviewing the results of the 2004 client survey and identifying areas for improvement that will be reported in the 2004/05 Service Plan Report	To be evaluated when data are available

The findings of the Environmental Assessment Office Client Satisfaction Survey (2004) conducted from April 19 to May 6, 2004 are being reviewed to identify areas for improvement that will be reported in the 2004/05 Service Plan Report.

Strategies completed or underway to improve harmonized intergovernmental reviews.

When a project is subject to both CEAA as well as the Act, the purpose of coordinated assessments is to minimize duplication and overlap and ensure timely reviews. In March 2004, the governments of Canada and British Columbia approved the Canada-British Columbia Agreement on Environmental Assessment Cooperation (2004). This agreement reflects the amendments to CEAA and changes to the Act. Amendments included in the 2004 agreement improve and update the earlier agreement first completed in 1997:

- A recognition that work planning will be approached on a project-by-project basis, so that provincial timelines are more likely to be achieved by both levels of government;
- A dispute resolution mechanism was incorporated to involve senior-level officials from both governments in cooperating to resolve policy and process disputes. There is now a provision to allow third party intervention to resolve issues, if both parties agree; and
- The recently introduced role of the Federal Environmental Assessment Coordinator is included in the agreement as an improvement to managing federal participation in cooperative reviews.

The Environmental Assessment Office and the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency are developing operational procedures where CEAA screening level reviews and the Act reviews are being conducted jointly. These procedures are designed to:

- Facilitate implementation of the Canada-British Columbia Agreement on Environmental Assessment Cooperation (2004) by providing guidance and establishing procedures for notification, establishing common information requirements, developing project work plans and coordinating decision-making during cooperative reviews;

- Clarify how key steps and decision points under CEAA and the Act will be managed during cooperative assessments so that both parties are able to meet their legislative and policy requirements; and
- Promote consistency in the interpretation and implementation of the agreement.

Goal 2: *Organizational Excellence*

This goal is achieved by ensuring that the Environmental Assessment Office supports organizational development to optimize its ability to provide efficient and effective delivery of environmental assessment. It also entails ensuring effective and efficient communication with all parties involved in environmental assessments.

Objective 1: ***Support Organizational development to optimize ability to deliver environmental assessment***

This objective focuses on creating a healthy, performance-focused environment with proactive leadership and continuous improvement.

Key Strategies:

- Update and implement a Human Resource Management Plan that includes strategies for fair workforce adjustment, staff training, development and succession;
- Implement performance management process;
- Support efficient utilization of public funds through shared services delivery; and
- Staff training on fulfilling government legal obligations towards First Nations.

6. *Employee Performance and Development Plans*

Performance Measure	2002/03 Base Data	2003/04 Target	2003/04 Actual	Variance
Percentage of staff with Employee Performance and Development Plans (EPDP) in place	All staff had EPDP's plans in place by March 31, 2003	100%	100%	Target met. There is no variance

All permanent staff have Employee Performance and Development Plans in place. All staff (including auxiliary and temporary appointments) will have Employee Performance and Development Plans in 2004/05. Staff training is a mandatory element of Employee Performance and Development Plans.

Strategies for Organizational Development

For the 2003/04 period, the Environmental Assessment Office provided a one day workshop for staff on the Provincial Consultation Policy and another workshop in the fall of 2003 to update new developments in First Nations consultation. In addition, a comprehensive

orientation manual on First Nations involvement in environmental assessment was completed and made available to staff.

The Environmental Assessment Office followed government's policies and guidelines strategy for succession planning and staff development is achieved by a matrix management model and specific development opportunities are offered through temporary assignments at the Environmental Assessment Office.

Provincial policies respecting workforce adjustment were applied.

Objective 2: *Communicate Effectively with all Stakeholders*

The Environmental Assessment Office has established an electronic Project Information Centre (ePIC) to facilitate access to general information about the environmental assessment process, as well as specific information on individual project assessments. The principal means of accessing ePIC is through the Environmental Assessment Office website. The Public Consultation Policy Regulation identifies documentation related to each project environmental assessment that is normally made available to the public through the website. Information on ePIC is updated on an ongoing basis. Internal project reports are available within the Environmental Assessment Office to monitor the timing of information that is launched on the website. The Environmental Assessment Office is committed to improving the access and ease of use of the website since this is the primary mechanism for access to information. The ePIC is essential for providing efficient and effective environmental assessment, and for ensuring open government and accountable decision-making.

Key Strategies:

- Facilitate access to information about project reviews and the environmental assessment process; and
- Improve web-based access to key review documents.

7. Switch to Electronic Documentation

Performance Measure	2000/01 Actual	2001/02 Actual	2002/03 Base Data	2003/04 Target	2003/04 Actual	Variance
Number of website visits per year	Visitors: 91,498 Number of hits: 2,387,369 Visits: 242,312	Visitors: 104,723 Number of hits: 3,219,822 Visits: 328,426	Visitors: 92,901 Number of hits: 3,058,889	Continual improvement (increase 2001/02 level by 20%)	Visitors 68,124 Number or Hits: 6,132,031	Number of visitors below target but number of hits more than doubled.

In April 2002, the Environmental Assessment Office moved its server to a new host ministry. As a result, the website visit statistics for 2002/03 were calculated differently than in previous years. The Environmental Assessment Office's new host server does not provide website traffic statistics in terms of visits (a visit is defined as a collection of requests that

represents all the pages and graphics seen by a particular visitor at one time) that are comparable to data collected in previous years. The implementation of ePIC in January 2003 required a further change to the way website traffic is calculated. New baseline data was collected starting in January 2003, to reflect the new approach to statistical reporting.

Website visitors are based on the number of unique addresses that accessed the Environmental Assessment Office's website each month. Website hits are based on the total number of Environmental Assessment Office website pages and graphics viewed by visitors. A visitor can access multiple pages and graphics during one visit and incur multiple hits.

The number of visitors decreased initially following the introduction of ePIC in early 2003. This may have been due to early difficulties in navigating the website with the changes or may have been due to other factors. Website users knew the Environmental Assessment Office's new legislation was coming into force in late 2002 and this could have been another reason why the number of visitors increased during this time and then decreased once the information was placed on the website. Number of visitors began increasing in the summer of 2003 so levels during the first quarter of 2004 have increased and are now comparable to levels observed for most of 2002.

The number of website hits has more than doubled from an average of 2,888,693 for the period 2000/01 to 2002/03 to 6,132,031 during 2003/04. The sharp rise during this later stage indicates users are actively using the new features on ePIC. In the last survey of participants conducted in March 2003, 80 per cent of respondents rated the accessibility of information on project reviews as high or very high.

The Environmental Assessment Office monitors the effectiveness of ePIC and develops system updates and enhancements as necessary. In 2003, a review participant contact management module was developed to allow more efficient access to our participant data base. As well, an internet mapping application was completed that will allow users to search for projects geographically.

The ePIC Performance, Tracking and Reports module is an enhancement to the existing ePIC application developed in early 2004. These reports enable internal reporting on:

- The status of projects at various stages of review;
- Organizational performance in terms of progress towards legislated and procedurally defined environmental assessment review milestones; and
- Project assignments to staff.

8. *Participants' perceptions of accessibility of project review information*

Performance Measures	2002/03 Base Data	2003/04 Target	2003/04 Actual	2003/04 Variance
Participants' perceptions of accessibility of project review information	Proponent, First Nations and review participants surveys conducted in March 2003	Proponents: Continual improvement Others: Maintain or improve	The EAO is in the process of reviewing the results of the 2004 client survey and identifying areas for improvement that will be reported in the 2004/05 Service Plan Report	To be evaluated when data are available

The findings of the Environmental Assessment Office Client Satisfaction Survey (2004) conducted from April 19, 2004 to May 6, 2004 are being reviewed to identify areas for improvement that will be reported in the 2004/05 Service Plan Report.

Deregulation

The Government of British Columbia is committed to reducing unnecessary red tape and regulation by one-third within three years. The Environmental Assessment Office set a target of 33 per cent for fiscal year 2004/05. Legislative and policy changes made in fiscal year 2002/03 resulted in a 56 per cent reduction in the regulatory burden associated with the environmental assessment process in British Columbia. This exceeds the Environmental Assessment Office's target by 23 per cent. This level of reduction will be maintained throughout 2005/06. The new Act provides for a streamlined review process and allows more procedural flexibility to accommodate project specific circumstances.

Report on Resources

Resource Summary by Core Business Areas

The table below shows the budgeted resources for the Environmental Assessment Office.

2003/04 Resource Summary

	Estimated	Other Authorizations	Total Estimated	Actual	Variance
Operating Expenses ($000)					
Total	**$2,897**[1]	**0**	**$2,897**	**$2,855**	**$42**
Full Time Equivalents (FTEs)					
Total	**29**	**0**	**29**	**28**	**1**
Capital Expenditures ($000)					
Total	**$103**	**0**	**$103**	**$43**	**$60**

[1]In 2003/04, the Ministry of Transportation provided $271,800 to fund the review of new transportation initiatives, including the Sea to Sky Highway Improvement Project.

Appendix 1

Projects Certified April 1, 2003 — March 31, 2004

Project (proponent)	Location	Investment ($million)	Jobs (Operating)	Date Certified
Coursier Dam Decommissioning	40 km South of Revelstoke	3.4		May 8, 2003
Eagle Rock Quarry	Alberni Inlet	95	81	September 17, 2003
Vancouver Island Generation	Nanaimo-Duke Point	300	20	December 17, 2003
Prince George Groundwater (Fishtrap Island Collector Well)	Prince George	9.5		February 26, 2004

Appendix 2

Amendments to Projects April 1, 2003 – March 31, 2004

Project (proponent)	Location	Description	Date
Cougar Pit Coal Amendment 1 (Fording Coal Limited)	Elkford	A minor amendment to transfer the name of the holder of Project Approval Certificate M97-01 to Elk Valley Coal Corporation (Elk Valley), and other changes.	April 9, 2003
Pingston Creek Hydro-electric Project Amendment 4 (Canadian Hydro Developers (BC) Inc.)	60 km South of Revelstoke	Amended by adding to Schedule A of the Certificate, the following document: Pingston Hydro-electric Project Expansion: Notice of Proposed Changes with respect to the installation of an additional 15 MW turbine and second penstock for the Pingston Creek Hydro-electric Project and other changes.	June 11, 2003
Pingston Creek Hydro-electric Amendment 5 (Canadian Hydro Developers (BC) Inc.)	60 km South of Revelstoke	Amendment informing EAO of a change in proponent name from Canadian Hydro Developers (CHD) to Pingston Power Inc.	July 3, 2003
Forrest Kerr Hydro-electric Project Amendment 1 (Coast Mountain Hydro Corporation)	100 km NW of Stewart on the Iskut River	Amendment to Schedule A regarding generating capacity and definitions.	August 6, 2003
Keenleyside Powerplant Project Amendment 11 (Columbia Power Corporation)	Columbia River at Castlegar	Various minor amendments.	August 6, 2003

Project (proponent)	Location	Description	Date
Sulphurets Gold/Silver Project Amendment 4 (Newhawk Gold Mines Ltd)	North of Stewart BC	Certificate extended for three years to September 20, 2006. Certificate amended to include a requirement for proponent to consult with the Nisga'a Lisims Government prior to seeking provincial government approvals.	January 21, 2004

Appendix 3

Projects In the Review Process
April 1, 2003 — March 31, 2004

Project (proponent)	Location	Investment ($million)	Jobs (Operating)	Status of Review
Mining				
Hills Bar Aggregate Quarrying	Hills Bar, near Yale BC	8	25	New aggregate quarry. Anticipated timing for submitting application is uncertain. Pre-application stage.
Orca Sand and Gravel	4 km West of Port McNeil	60	50	Sand and gravel project with a production capacity of up to 6,000,000 tonnes per year. Developing draft Terms of Reference. Pre-application stage.
Wolverine Coal Mine	Northwest of Tumbler Ridge	116	386	Supplementary information report received April 1/04 and accepted by the EAO (April 30/04). Application stage.
Red Chris Porphyry Copper-Gold Mine	18 km SE Iskut	150	200	Open pit copper-gold mine with mill processing 25,000 tonnes of ore per day. Draft Terms of Reference being reviewed. Pre-application stage.
Cariboo Gold Mine	Adjacent to Wells	60	50	Terms of Reference expected October 2004. Pre-application stage.
Cogburn Magnesium	Hope	800		Pre-application stage.
Fording Turnbull North Pit	Elk Valley			Extension of Fording River mine. Pre-application stage.

Project (proponent)	Location	Investment ($million)	Jobs (Operating)	Status of Review
Mining				
Kemess North Copper Gold	250 km NE of Smithers	193	528	Open pit copper-gold mine with a production of 75,000 tonnes. Extends the life of the Kemess South mine to 2019. Terms of Reference and Section 11 Order to be drafted. Pre-application stage.
Morrison Copper Gold	65 km NE of Smithers	200	500	Copper and gold project with an estimated production of up to 9,000,000 tonnes per year. Pre-application stage.
Sustut Copper	193 km NE of Smithers	32	50	Open pit copper mine with a proposed 10 km haul road. Developing draft Terms of Reference. Pre-application stage.
Galore Creek Gold/ Silver/Copper	NW British Columbia 75 km NE Eskay Creek Mine	700	500	Copper and gold project with a production capacity between 30,000 and 60,000 tonnes per day. Expected mine life of 25 years. Pre-application stage.
Transportation				
Sea to Sky Highway Improvement	West Vancouver to Whistler	600		Expansion of existing highway. Review of application. Referred to Ministers' May 2004 for decision.
Richmond/Airport/ Vancouver Rapid Transit	Lower Mainland	1,700		Light rail transit to connect Central Richmond, downtown Vancouver, Sea Island and the Vancouver International Airport. Pre-application stage.

Project (proponent)	Location	Investment ($million)	Jobs (Operating)	Status of Review
Transportation				
Container Terminal 2	Lower Mainland – Roberts Bank			New container port. Pre-application stage.
Deltaport Third Berth	Lower Mainland – Roberts Bank			Expansion of existing port terminal. Pre-application stage.
Energy				
Cascade Heritage Power	Near Christina Lake	24	3	Application under review. Awaiting proponent response to comments. Application stage.
Holberg Wind Energy	Mount Brandes near Holberg, North Vancouver Island		6	58.5 MW wind power project with a total of 39 wind turbines. Reviewing draft Terms of Reference. Pre-application stage.
Knob Hill Wind Farm	Northern Vancouver Island (Holberg BC)	700	25	Application under review. Public comment period from March 19, 2004 to April 30, 2004. Application stage.
Nai Kun Wind Farm	Queen Charlotte Islands (Offshore)			700 MW wind turbine project. Section 10 issued. Pre-application stage.
Waneta Hydro-electric Expansion (2003)	17 km South of Trail BC	300		Proposed new 380 MW hydro-electric generation station on the right bank of the Pend d'Oreille River. Pre-application stage.
Kwoiek Creek Hydro-electric	Fraser Canyon 22 km South of Lytton	90	6	Awaiting supplementary information from proponent. Application review stage.

Project (proponent)	Location	Investment ($million)	Jobs (Operating)	Status of Review
Water Management				
Kamloops Groundwater	Kamloops	5	6	Application review stage. (EA Certificate issued on April 13, 2004.)
Cranbrook Deep Wells	City of Cranbrook	1		Supplementary information from proponent currently under review. Application review stage.
Vancouver Convention Centre Expansion	Lower Mainland	515		Formal review of application commenced on February 2, 2004. Application review stage.
New Fraser River Crossing	Lower Mainland	600		Bridge across the Fraser River from Maple Ridge to Langley. Application stage.
Chemainus Wells	Chemainus	3.62		Municipal Groundwater Supply. Pre-application stage.
Tourist Destination Resorts				
Jumbo Glacier Resort	Jumbo Creek Valley 55 km West of Invermere	450	850	Project Report accepted for review on January 27, 2004. 180-day review period began February 5, 2004. Public comment period February 13, 2004 to April 13, 2004. Application review stage.
Whistler Nordic Centre	Callaghan Valley	100		Construction of Nordic facility for 2010 Olympics. Section 10 issued. Pre-application stage.

Project (proponent)	Location	Investment ($million)	Jobs (Operating)	Status of Review
Tourist Destination Resorts				
Garibaldi at Squamish Mountain Resort Development	13 km North of Squamish	238	620	Additional information from proponent to be submitted by June 30, 2004. Pre-application stage.
Waste Disposal				
Ashcroft Ranch Landfill Project (Greater Vancouver Regional District)	Ashcroft Ranch – Near Ashcroft BC	15	100	Application Terms of Reference issued on August 29, 2003. The GVRD is currently conducting studies and compiling information for Application – expected Summer 2004. Pre-application stage.